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Thinking inside the box: Using telehealth to expand clinical education and training resources in the developing world

Twenty years ago, University of Virginia became one of the first medical centers in the United States to see the potential of using video communications to improve access to needed healthcare, especially for rural communities. To that end, the university formed a center for telehealth to mobilize physicians, nurses, community health professionals and technologists to harness broadband and wireless technologies to deliver critical medical services to patients regardless of location. This UVA network has created access to care for thousands in rural communities throughout Virginia but also has extended the reach of health education, training and specialty care to Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia. And with emerging globalization, the health of people in distant communities can affect the health of people everywhere. The focus of this presentation will be the current state of telehealth capabilities in providing both broadband and wireless connectivity into hard to reach communities. With the decrease cost of video-technology, the rapid expansion of cellular service and the near ubiquitous presence of cell phones, the environment for care is expanding. The speakers, with 20 years of nursing, public health and telehealth experience, will provide a primer on how to establish a telehealth program, a review of costs and technologies as well as an exploration of various clinical use cases. In particular, the speakers will review the outcomes from four successful projects that include a surgical and nurse training program with the University of Rwanda, a specialty clinic in Liberia, a mid-wife training in the DRC (PROSAMI) as well as educational and research support for projects in Uganda, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Participants will leave a broader understanding of telehealth, program design and ideas for expanding the reach of clinical services.

Biography

Mr. Cattell-Gordon has worked at UVA for over two decades. He helped design, develop and implement the cancer education, support and outreach programs for the University of Virginia Clinical Cancer Center. This included developing community-based programs such as the Every Women's Life Health Passport which won the prestigious national Profiles in Progress Award. He left UVA in 2004 to serve as Associate Director of a large social service department where he led a successful effort to secure the 2007 Virginia US Senate Productivity and Quality Award. Cattell-Gordon returned to UVA in 2008 as a faculty member in the Division of Public Health Sciences and the School of Nursing. He directs the nationally recognized UVA Telemedicine program, oversees rural network development for the UVA Health System and is the co-founder of and senior advisor to the Healthy Appalachia Institute at UVA's College at Wise, an Appalachian-based public health institute. He is currently working with key partners in far Southwest Virginia to help shape a strategic health planning process for the region. He is also helping develop tele-core, a resource capability using telehealth technologies to improve clinical outcomes and access to clinical trials. He is also a founder of the Virginia Institute of Autism, an applied behavioral school, support program and research organization.

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